

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-8 (canceled).

9 (currently amended). A method for operating a switching system for data packets having variable lengths, which comprises:

providing a switching system having inputs and outputs;

temporarily storing complete data packets at an input of the switching system;

~~sending only a message,~~ if a data packet is received for transmitting to another switching system, sending only a message so that a transmission of data and a transmission of information for defining a sequence for the transmission of the data are independent of one another to an output of the switching system, the message containing a reference, information about priority for correct marshalling of the

data packet, and information about a length of the data packet;

queuing a message packet containing at least one message in a waiting queue at the output of the switching system; and

returning a further message to an input memory from an appropriate output as soon as the data packet can be dispatched through the output, and only then transmitting the data packet to an appropriate destination.

10 (cancel).

11 (previously presented). The method according to claim 9, wherein the sending step is performed by sending the message packet along a given transmission path, and which further comprises transmitting the data packet through the given transmission path but through a separate logical channel.

12 (original). The method according to claim 11, wherein the given transmission path is a physical transmission path.

13 (canceled).

14 (previously presented). The method according to claim 9, wherein the returning step is performed by returning the further message containing information about the destination of the data packet.

15 (previously presented). The method according to claim 9, which further comprises transmitting message packets, each containing multiple messages, together with the data packets through the switching system.

16 (original). The method according to claim 9, which further comprises handling transmission of a message with a data flow controller.

17 (original). The method according to claim 9, which further comprises handling transmission of messages with a data flow controller.

18 (original). The method according to claim 9, which further comprises producing, if a data packet is transmitted to a plurality of destinations, only a plurality of messages and placing the messages into a respective queue.

19 (currently amended). A method for operating a switching system for data packets having variable lengths, which comprises:

providing a switching system having inputs and outputs;

temporarily storing complete data packets at an input of the switching system;

~~sending only a message~~, if a data packet is received for transmitting to another switching system, sending only a message so that a transmission of data and a transmission of information for defining a sequence for the transmission of the data are independent of one another to an output of the switching system, the message containing a reference, information about priority for correct marshalling of the data packet, and information about a length of the data packet, and, if the data packet is transmitted to a plurality of destinations, only producing a plurality of messages and placing the messages into the respective queue;

queuing a message packet containing at least one message in a waiting queue at the output of the switching system; and

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returning a further message to an input memory from an appropriate output as soon as the data packet can be dispatched through the output, and only then transmitting the data packet to an appropriate destination.